

Thomas Jefferson to Count de Volney, February 11, 1806, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO C. F. COMTE DE VOLNEY J. MSS.

Washington, Feb. 11, 1806.

Dear Sir, —Since mine of Feb. 18 of the last year, I have received yours of July 2. I have been constantly looking out for an opportunity of sending your Polygraph; but the blockade of Havre has cut off that resource, and I have feared to send it to a port from which there would be only land carriage. A safe conveyance now offering to Nantes, & under the particular care of Mr. Skipwith, who is returning to France, he will take care of it from Nantes by land if an easy carriage is found, or if not, then by the canal of Briare. Another year's constant use of a similar one attaches me more and more to it as a most valuable convenience. I send you also a pamphlet published here against the English doctrine which denies to neutrals a trade in war not open to them in peace in which you will find it pulverized by a logic not to be controverted.

Our last news of Capt'n Lewis was that he had reached the upper part of the Missouri, & had taken horses to cross the Highlands to the Columbia river. He passed the last winter among the Manians 1610 miles above the mouth of the river. So far he had delineated it with as great accuracy as will probably be ever applied to it, as his courses & distances by mensuration were corrected by almost daily observations of latitude and longitude. With his map he sent us specimens or information of the following animals not before known to the northern continent of America. 1. The horns of what is perhaps a species of *Ovis Ammon*. 2. A new variety of the deer having a black tail. 3. An antelope. 4. The badger,

Library of Congress

not before known out of Europe. 5. A new species of marmotte. 6. A white weasel. 7. The magpie. 8. The Prairie hen, said to resemble the Guinea hen (peintade). 9. A prickly lizard. To these are added a considerable collection of minerals, not yet analyzed. He wintered in Lat. 47° 20' and found the maximum of cold 43° below the zero of Fahrenheit. We expect he has reached the Pacific, and is now wintering on the head of the Missouri, and will be here next autumn. Having been disappoint-

ed in our view of sending an exploring party up the Red river the last year, they were sent up the Washita, as far as the hot springs, under the direction of Mr. Dunbar. He found the temperature of the springs 150° of Fahrenheit & the water perfectly potable when cooled. We obtain also the geography of that river, so far with perfect accuracy. Our party is just at this time setting out from Natchez to ascend the Red river. These expeditions are so laborious, & hazardous, that men of science, used to the temperature & inactivity of their closet, cannot be induced to undertake them. They are headed therefore by persons qualified expressly to give us the geography of the rivers with perfect accuracy, and of good common knowledge and observation in the animal, vegetable & mineral departments. When the route shall be once open and known, scientific men will undertake, & verify & class its subjects. Our emigration to the western country from these states the last year is estimated at about 100,000. I conjecture that about one-half the number of our increase will emigrate westwardly annually. A newspaper paragraph tells me, with some details, that the society of agriculture of Paris had thought a mould-board of my construction worthy their notice & Mr. Dupont confirms it in a letter, but not specifying anything particular. I send him a model with an advantageous change in the form, in which however the principle is rigorously the same. I mention this to you lest he should have left France for America, and I notice it no otherwise lest there should have been any error in the information. Present my respectful salutations to Doctr. Cabanis & accept them yourself with assurances of my constant friendship & attachment.